

language is, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice." Phil. 4: 4. This is the privilege; yes, the right of every believer.

Let us cultivate more joy as a fruit of the spirit, and so testify to ourselves and to others that we have the genuine thing, pure and lasting, which the world seeks for but can never find nor ever give. Do I then object to and condemn amusements? Recreation we should and must have. Is not recreation the better word? Their object is to recreate, to restore lost vigor, to repair wasted strength, to refit us anew for the work of life. We need them in order to do our work better, with more zeal, and a more cheerful spirit. They are to the mind what sleep is to the body. And for this end they must be *innocent* and not *too prolonged*. Take them and use them without any unnatural gloom or remorse of conscience. We must never feel them to be stolen joys. But what is the boundary line between what I may indulge in and should not, may be asked? It is a difficult question to answer, because we have to live out principles rather than rules. We cannot really define what God has not defined in his word. Conscience, judgment, and Christian experience must help decide what it is best to avoid or enter into. If we are true Christians we can well afford to avoid and shun every appearance of evil, and leave them to those who need their excitement and occupation. Shows, theaters, plays and games have sown many a seed of corruption, and been the first step of many a downward career. Perhaps these are only incidental evils, but while they exist shall we expose ourselves or our friends to them? I think not. If any of our enjoyments are of a nature to make us discontented, or if there be left behind a craving for more and more of the excitement, this will finally take away some of our relish for religious exercises, and make our spiritual concerns more indifferent, and the thought of God and a coming eternity forgotten to a certain extent. Then we are not dealing justly with our souls and are in peril. Such being our experience, let no persuasion or example, no plea of their innocence or safety tempt us to indulge in amusements which leave us so.

Our responsibility is our own. Let us act with Christian frankness and independence. But some one will still secretly say, Oh, for some rule to guide me in in this matter. Well, there is one rule that will help us. Whatever we do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And before entering into any engagement or company, ask ourselves honestly, can I do this in the

name of the Lord? Can I truly say it is such as the Lord will approve of? Can I look up to him all the time for his sanction and blessing? If we can answer these questions satisfactorily the engagement must be right. If on the contrary, our mind recoils from the inquiry, be sure there is something wrong in it, and we will do well to abandon it. Seasons of recreation are often the severe tests of our piety. Wherever we are, at home or abroad, let us be sure that we carry the presence of the Lord with us. Let us be careful not to grieve the Lord or his people by a gay and graceful repudiation of all that distinctively belongs to a Christian. Too many do this, and do it quite thoughtlessly too, without meaning it, without knowing it. Christianity has no hard recreations. It is the very essence of heavenly principle, permeating, purifying, elevating the whole life, and since our recreations are as truly a part of our life as our business, let the sign of the cross be upon them—that is that degree of self denial and self-restraint which will prevent our being depraved or let down by them. To grow in active, competent, power and vigor, is the true aim of recreations, spiritual gain and nothing less, and as sleep rests and refreshes the body, waking up to a new life, so recreations rightly and wisely used, will give spring to the spirit and a fresh sense of the joy of living.

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16: 11.

Habitual trust in God for all needed good is the great means of increasing joy, peace, hope, and all the graces of the spirit in the hearts of Christians, and also of leading them to abound in every good word and work. The only sure evidence of being born of God, adopted into his family, and made heirs of the blessings of his kingdom, is the possession of a filial spirit towards our Father in heaven; a spirit of confidence, affection, submission and obedience connected with faith in Christ, and a hearty reliance on him for salvation. There has always been a proneness in some professors of religion to depend for salvation upon the observance of rites, forms and ceremonies, rather than on Christ. In such cases there is reason to fear that they will be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Ashland, O.

"MARY," said the sick man to his wife when the doctor pronounced it a case of smallpox, "if any of my creditors call, tell them that I am last in a condition to give them something."—*Christian Work*.

BIBLE EXEGESIS.

J. C. CASSEL.

I believe that the Bible is given to us in plain simple language, easily understood, and literal to a degree that is scarcely thought of by most believers; it will remain for future dispensations to develop this fact to the confusion of some, and the utter destruction of others. I have entertained this idea for some time, but it was greatly strengthened by the recent reading of Dr. A. T. Pierson's book entitled "*Many Infallible Proofs*." It is amazing to learn how completely, how minutely, how literally the prophecies concerning Christ were fulfilled in his birth, his life, his character, his teaching, his suffering, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and the out pouring of the Holy Spirit. It is said that the Old Testament is our schoolmaster, if that be so, we ought to learn from it the fact that the New Testament is not given to us in ambiguous terms, in far-fetched language, in incomprehensible phrases, but that every prediction, every promise, and every threat will be literally fulfilled; that the New is "*yea*" and "*amen*" in its teaching as well as the Old; that it leaves men no prerogative to accept, or reject what they please, unless they choose to suffer the consequences.

Now then in the light of the above facts what is the proper method of interpretation, or what has a literal significance, what has both a literal and spiritual significance, and what has only a spiritual; there must be some rule to determine these questions otherwise, it would not be possible to comprehend God's word, nor to communicate it intelligently to others. Happily there is a rule, and if it is applied to the Scriptures as it is to other literature there is no difficulty in arriving at the truth, and intent of the word. All the confusion, misunderstanding and varied opinions concerning the Scriptures come from the disregard of all rules of language when the Word of God is in question. My knowledge of letters is but very limited, but I understand it to be a fixed rule of language to take words or sentences in their literal, obvious sense wherever they make sense, if not modified by other words or sentences, and only in their figurative, or spiritual sense when the literal is not possible.

It is remarkable how different the conditions of things would be if the above rule was adhered in the study and application of Bible truth. For instance look at the commission of Christ to the church. He says "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy